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H3563 – 0003

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Paul Joosten

PAUL A. JOOSTEN

General Secretary
International Military Tribunal

Nuremberg, 28 July 1948

[4.]

TC72

INTERNATIONAL MILITARY TRIBUNAL
NURNBERG, GERMANY
GB Exhibit 39
Filed Aug 6 1945

Miscellaneous No. 9 (1939)

DOCUMENTS

CONCERNING

GERMAN-POLISH RELATIONS

AND THE

OUTBREAK OF HOSTILITIES BETWEEN GREAT BRITAIN AND GERMANY ON SEPTEMBER 3, 1939

Presented by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to Parliament by Command of His Majesty

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H3563 – 0004

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H3563 – 0005

No. 14.

German Government Memorandum handed to the Polish Government on April 28, 1939.

(Translation.)

THE German Government have taken note of the Polish-British declaration regarding the progress and aims of the negotiations recently conducted between Poland and Great Britain. According to this declaration there has been concluded between the Polish Government and the British Government a temporary understanding, to be replaced shortly by a permanent agreement which will provide for the giving of mutual assistance by Poland and Great Britain in the event of the independence of one of the two States being directly or indirectly threatened.

2. The German Government consider themselves obliged to communicate the following to the Polish Government:—

3. When in 1933 the National Socialist Government set about the reshaping of German policy, after Germany's departure from the League of Nations, their first object was to stabilise German-Polish relations on a new plane. The Chancellor of the German Reich and the late Marshal Pilsudski concurred in the decision to break with the political methods of the past and to enter, as regards the settlement of all questions affecting both States, on the path of direct understanding between them.

4. By means of the unconditional renunciation of the use of force, guarantees of peace were instituted in order to assist the two States in the difficult task of solving all political, economic and cultural problems by means of the just and equitable adjustment of mutual interests. These principles, contained in a binding form in the German-Polish Peace Declaration of the 26th January, 1934, had this aim in view [*sic*] and by their practical success were intended to introduce an entirely new phase of German-Polish relations. The political history of the last five years shows that they proved efficacious in practice for both nations. As recently as the 26th January of this year, on the fifth anniversary of the signature of the declaration, both sides publicly confirmed this fact, while emphasising their united will to maintain in the future their adhesion to the principles established in 1934.

5. The agreement which has now been concluded by the Polish Government with the British Government is in such obvious contradiction to these solemn declarations of a few months ago that the German Government can take note only with surprise and astonishment of such a violent reversal of Polish policy. Irrespective of the manner in which its final formulation may be determined by both parties, the new Polish-British Agreement is intended as a regular pact of alliance, which by reason of its general sense and of the present state of political relations is directed exclusively against Germany. From the obligation now accepted by the Polish Government it appears that Poland intends in certain circumstances to take

H3563 – 0006

an active part in any possible German-British conflict in the event of aggression against Germany, even should this conflict not affect Poland and her interests. This is a direct and open blow against the renunciation of all use of force contained in the 1934 declaration.

6. The contradiction between the German-Polish Declaration and the Polish-British Agreement is, however, even more far-reaching in its importance than that. The 1934 declaration was to constitute a basis for the regulation of all differences arising between the two countries, independently of international complications and combinations, by means of direct discussion between Berlin and Warsaw, to the exclusion of external influences. Naturally, such a basis must rest on the mutual confidence of both parties and on the political loyalty of the intentions of one party with regard to the other.

7. The Polish Government, however, by their recent decision to accede to an alliance directed against Germany, have given it to be understood that they prefer a promise of help by a third Power to the direct guarantee of peace by the German Government. In view of this the German Government are obliged to conclude that the Polish Government do not at present attach any importance to seeking a solution of German-Polish problems by means of direct friendly discussions with the German Government. The Polish Government have thus abandoned the path traced out in 1934 for the shaping of German-Polish relations.

8. The Polish Government cannot in this connexion appeal to the fact that the 1934 declaration was not to affect the obligations previously accepted by Poland and Germany in relation to third parties, and that the Treaty of Alliance between Poland and France maintained its value side by side with that declaration. The Polish-French Alliance already existed in 1934 when Poland and Germany proceeded to reorganise their relations. The German Government were able to accept this fact, since they were entitled to expect that the possible dangers of the Polish-French Alliance, dating from the period of the acutest German-Polish differences, would automatically lose more and more of their significance through the establishment of friendly relations between Germany and Poland. However, the entry of Poland into relations of alliance with Great Britain, which was effected five years after the publication of the declaration of 1934, can for this reason in no way be compared politically with the still valid Polish-French Alliance. By this new alliance the Polish Government have subordinated themselves to a policy inaugurated from another quarter aiming at the encirclement of Germany.

9. The German Government for their part have not given the least cause for such a change in Polish policy. Whenever opportunity offered, they have furnished the Polish Government, both publicly and in confidential conversations, with the most binding assurances that the friendly development of German-Polish relations is a fundamental aim of their foreign policy, and that, in their political decisions, they will always respect Poland's proper interests. Thus the action taken by Germany in March of this year with a view

to the pacification of Central Europe did not, in the opinion of the Government of the Reich, disturb Polish interests in any way. This action led to the creation of a common Polish-Hungarian frontier, which had constantly been described on Poland's side as an important political objective. Moreover, the German Government gave unequivocal expression to their readiness to discuss with the Polish Government in a friendly manner all problems which, in the Polish Government's opinion, might arise out of the changed conditions in Central Europe.

10. In an equally friendly spirit the German Government tried to regulate yet another question outstanding between Germany and Poland, namely, that of Danzig. The fact that this question required settlement had long been emphasised on the German side, and was not denied on the Polish side. For a long time past the German Government have endeavoured to convince the Polish Government that a solution was certainly possible which would be equitable to the interests of both parties and that the removal of this last obstacle would open a path for a political collaboration of Germany and Poland with the most favourable prospects. In this connexion the German Government did not confine themselves to allusions of a general nature, but in March of this year proposed to the Polish Government in a friendly form a settlement of this question on the following basis :—

11. The return of Danzig to the Reich. An extra-territorial railway line and *autostrada* between East Prussia and the Reich. In exchange, the recognition by the Reich of the whole Polish Corridor and the whole of Poland's western frontier; the conclusion of a non-aggression pact for twenty-five years; the maintenance of Poland's economic interests in Danzig and the settlement of the remaining economic and communications problems arising for Poland out of the union of Danzig with the Reich. At the same time, the German Government expressed their readiness to respect Polish interests in ensuring the independence of Slovakia.

12. Nobody knowing conditions in Danzig and the Corridor and the problems connected therewith can deny, in judging the matter objectively, that this proposal constitutes the very minimum which must be demanded from the point of view of German interests, which cannot be renounced. The Polish Government, however, gave a reply which, although couched in the form of counter-proposals, showed in its essence an entire lack of comprehension for the German point of view and was equivalent merely to a rejection of the German proposals. The Polish Government proved that they did not consider their reply suitable for the initiation of friendly discussions by proceeding at the same time, in a manner as unexpected as it was drastic, to effect a partial mobilisation of the Polish army on a large scale. By these entirely unjustified measures, the Polish Government demonstrated the meaning and object of the negotiations which they immediately afterwards entered upon with the British Government. The German Government do not consider it necessary to reply to the

H3563 – 0007

partial Polish mobilisation by counter-measures of a military character. They cannot, however, disregard without a word the decisions recently taken by the Polish Government, and are forced, to their own regret, to declare as follows :—

(1) The Polish Government did not avail themselves of the opportunity offered to them by the German Government for a just settlement of the Danzig question, for the final safeguarding of Poland's frontiers with the Reich, and thereby for a permanent strengthening of the friendly neighbourly relations between the two countries. The Polish Government even rejected German proposals made with this object.

(2) At the same time the Polish Government accepted, with regard to another State, political obligations which are not compatible either with the spirit, the meaning or the text of the German-Polish Declaration of the 26th January, 1934. Thereby the Polish Government arbitrarily and unilaterally rendered this declaration null and void.

13. In spite of this necessary statement of fact, the Government of the Reich do not intend to alter their fundamental attitude towards the question of the future of German-Polish relations. Should the Polish Government attach importance to a new settlement of these relations by means of a treaty, the German Government are ready to do this, but on one condition, namely, that such a settlement would have to consist of a clear obligation binding on both parties.

No. 15.

Speech made by M. Beck, the Polish Minister for Foreign Affairs in Parliament on May 5, 1939.

(Translation.)

THE session of the Parliament provides me with an opportunity of filling in some gaps which have occurred in my work of recent months. The course of international events might perhaps justify more statements by a Foreign Minister than my single *exposé* in the Senate Commission for Foreign Affairs.

2. On the other hand it was precisely that swift development of events that prompted me to postpone a public declaration until such time as the principal problems of our foreign policy had taken on a more definite form.

3. The consequences of the weakening of collective international institutions and of a complete change in the method of intercourse between nations, which I have reported on several occasions in the Houses, caused many new problems to arise in different parts of the world. That process and its results have in recent months reached the borders of Poland.

4. A very general definition of these phenomena may be given by saying that relations between individual Powers have taken on a

H3563 – 0008

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H3563 - 0009

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